

Understanding CEQA

What is CEQA?

The *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA) sets statewide policies that require both state and local agencies to consider the environmental consequences of their decisions. The goal of CEQA is to:

- Provide information about the environmental effects of the project.
- Identify potentially significant environmental impacts and adopt all feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives to reduce such impacts.
- Disclose the basis for the decision of the project considering its environmental effects.

Why is an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) being prepared?

The City of Riverside determined that the **Crystal View Terrace/Green Orchard Place/Overlook Parkway Project** could result in significant environmental effects. Environmental review is the evaluation process that CEQA requires public agencies to conduct before considering a project for approval.

Environmental review is a set of procedures used to identify a project's potential impacts, identify potentially feasible mitigation measures and alternatives to reduce significant impacts, and report the results of the analysis to the public. When potentially significant impacts are identified, an EIR is prepared. The EIR will identify methods (mitigation measures) and project alternatives which will reduce adverse environmental effects to the extent feasible.

The EIR evaluates potential environmental impacts. They will include such issues as traffic circulation patterns, air quality, global warming/greenhouse gases, noise, biological resources, historical/cultural resources, land use and neighborhood character, agricultural resources, and paleontological resources to name a few. The City values and requests community input on the project.

How do I get involved?

There are several opportunities for public input. When the City circulates a *Notice of Preparation* (NOP), the public and agencies will have an opportunity to respond to the NOP. The City issued the NOP for this project on February 9, 2011. The NOP has been posted on the City's website. You can access it from the Planning Division homepage (www.riversideca.gov/planning) by clicking on the graphic for the Project or by going directly to

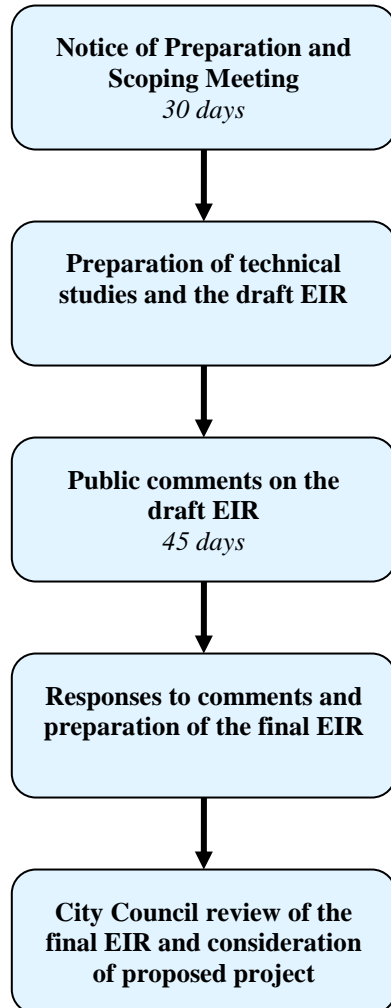
the project webpage, www.riversideca.gov/planning/eir.asp. Documents and updates on the EIR will also be posted to this webpage.

A public meeting will be held during the NOP review period on **March 9, 2011**. The public meeting provides an opportunity for the City to get a detailed understanding of the environmental impacts important to you. This meeting is being held to give the public and

interested parties an opportunity to submit comments regarding the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. This information will be used to develop the scope and content of the EIR for the project. This is your chance to let us know about environmental concerns or issues you believe should be addressed in the EIR.

The deadline to submit comments on the NOP for this project is **March 25, 2011 by 5:00 p.m.**

Once the Draft EIR is prepared, there is a *45-day* period for the public to review and submit comments.



What happens after the Public Review Period?

Responses are prepared for the comments received on the draft report. Based on the comments received, revisions to the EIR may be made. In addition to the responses, the City makes findings regarding environmental impacts. In the case that an impact cannot be avoided or mitigated to below a level of significance, the City could consider a *Statement of Overriding Considerations*. The Draft EIR, comments, and responses to your comments comprise the Final EIR, which are submitted with the findings and will be presented to the City Council. The City Council will discuss the EIR and hear from the public. Only then -- with full disclosure of the environmental impacts -- will the City decide on whether or not to move forward with the project.

How can I learn more about CEQA?

CEQA sets statewide policies that require both state and local agencies to consider the environmental consequences of their decisions. Read the City's CEQA Guidelines here: www.riversideca.gov/planning/pdf/R-21106.pdf. For detailed information on the State CEQA Guidelines, please visit: www.ceres.ca.gov.

The CEQA Statutes and Guidelines and the City's CEQA Guidelines are also linked to the project webpage along with other useful information about the project. Please visit the project website at www.riversideca.gov/planning/eir.asp.

Where do I send my comments about the EIR?

Comments submitted to City staff can be hand-delivered, mailed, or e-mailed directly to the Planning Division located at 3900 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92522. Comments submitted via e-mail should be forwarded to Gus Gonzalez, Associate Planner, at ggonzalez@riversideca.gov.